

## **FACE INVESTIGATION**

**SUBJECT: Road maintenance worker died 15 months after falling backwards off a dump truck onto pavement**

### **SUMMARY:**

This 44 year old white male worked as part of a road crew doing repairs for 5 years. While loading a large slab of cement into a dump truck, the victim was pinned against the top side of the dump truck box by the end loader bucket. When another worker removed the end loader bucket to release the victim, he fell backwards off the truck onto the pavement, striking his head. The incident occurred at 8:30 AM on a dry and sunny day. The physician handling the case indicated that the worker had been basically brain dead since the work incident and the pneumonia he suffered was directly related to the debilitated state he was in due to the fall. The Wisconsin FACE investigator concluded that, in order to prevent occurrences, the employer should:

! Survey the work-site to identify hazards. All employees should then be informed of possible hazards.

! Consider and address worker safety in the planning stages of projects.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

On January 30, 1992 a 44 year old road maintenance worker died of pneumonia, closed head injury caused by a fall 15 months earlier from a dump truck, striking head on pavement. The WI FACE investigator was notified by the Wisconsin Department of Labor and Human Relations, Workers Compensation Division on February 10, 1992. The death certificate, medical examiner's report, and workers compensation claim were obtained. This death was investigated by phone and the supervisor was interviewed by phone because the incident had happened October 8, 1990. The county representative (supervisor) estimated that work had been done in the agency for about 156 years. The county has a safety officer, there are written safety rules and workers are required to demonstrate their ability prior to being assigned to tasks.

### **INVESTIGATION:**

At 8:30 AM on October 8, 1990 the victim was part of a road crew doing road repairs. According to the medical examiner's report, the victim was in the dump truck box when another worker using an end loader loaded a large slab of cement into the dump truck box pinning the victim against the box with the end loader bucket. When the bucket was removed to release the victim, he fell backwards off the truck and onto the pavement. His treating physician indicated that the victim had been basically brain dead since the incident and that his death from pneumonia was directly related to his debilitated state which was caused by the fall at work.

**CAUSE OF DEATH: pneumonia, closed head injury**

**RECOMMENDATIONS/DISCUSSION:**

Recommendation #1: Conduct a jobsite survey before starting any job to identify potential hazards. Implement appropriate control measures, including training that specifically addresses all identified hazards. Consider placing a warning on all dump truck boxes, stay out of box while loading materials. Train all workers to recognize the need to remain clear of loading operations.

Recommendation #2: Employers should address worker safety issues in the planning phase of all projects. Prior to the loading of this slab of cement, planning should have included specific actions taken to make certain that all employees were clear of the box during loading.